MUTINY

A PAPER OF ANARCHISTIC IDEAS & ACTIONS

ISSUE 35
FEBRUARY 2009

FREE ZINE

SHAC: Melbourne squatters tell all!

Palestinian solidarity in Australia

A debate about Palestine and nationalism: Is a no-state solution possible?

It's Mutiny Zine's 3rd birthday on Friday 17th of April! We will be doing something awesome, possibly at Black Rose. Come and celebrate with us!

Mutiny is an anarchist collective based in Sydney. We started this zine to explore different avenues of disobedience & resistance, & to encourage people to write about their ideas, actions & experiences.

Mutiny began as an anti-war collective. We're currently exploring ways to resist gentrification, in particular the 'redevelopment' proposed in the Redfern area by the Redfern Waterloo Authority. We're keen to work with other people opposed to this redevelopment & the displacement, racism, rent hikes & ugliness it involves. We meet regularly, please contact us on the address below:

c/- PO Box 4, Enmore, NSW, 2042, Australia
mutineers@graffiti.net
Back issues at **www.jura.org.au/mutiny**

Editors this month: Princess Mob, T with Alice, Max Solidarity, SourDough, Graf Cat, Exploded Cake, Dumpstered Twin and Mambutu.

(The mutiny zine collective does not necessarily agree with all the opinions of contributors. Contributors do not necessarily agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective. The mutiny collective doesn't agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective.)

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news

Canberra: convergence against the Intervention

A year and a half since the Federal Government's intervention in the Northern Territory, representative communities including Hermannsburg, Mt Nancy Town Camp, Yuendemu, Central Lands Council, Larriakia Nation and Ti Tree converged on Canberra to discuss ways forward for the national campaign against the intervention and to take action. Organisers from Brisbane, Karanda in far north QLD, Mullimbimbi, Wiradjuri nation, Perth, Melbourne, Kuradji/Illawara and Sydney participated in two days of workshops at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy that covered sovereignty, reportbacks and strategy for the campaign, UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples, outstations and land title, fighting the cuts to Community Development and Employment Programs (CDEP) across Australia.

Traditional owners of Maningrida who challenged the Government's occupation of their land without compensation in the High Court heard the decision on February 2. Around 50 people spontaneously stormed the Court in outrage at the rejection of the appeal, which effectively reasserted the Government's "right" to occupy and steal land. Protestors refused the cops' orders to leave the building, and one person was arrested in the confrontation without charge.

A few hundred people marched to parliament on its first day of sitting. The tireless list of speakers illustrated the breadth and depth of peoples' dissent to the government's racist policies. The rally endorsed two proposals unanimously:

Barbara Shaw, of Mt Nancy camp, in Alice Springs, outside the High Court of Australia.

to arrange a meeting with trade unions in order to establish solidarity in the labour movement and that not one single job be cut in the campaign against the intervention and the scrapping of CDEP.

Following the rally a group of around 20 snuck in and caused a ruckus during Parliament's question time and were subsequently shown the door.

The basics card (read: rations card) that facilitates the intervention's welfare quarantining measures does not work outside of the NT. Community representatives from the NT led an action at Centrelink in Canberra on the 4th of February to demand the right to collect their payments wherever they are and the repeal of this repressive, unjust and restrictive legislation. On this day, some community leaders successfully pressured for a meeting with Jenny Macklin. Yet again, the Federal Government mocked the demands of Aboriginal communities in the NT. Macklin left after 5 minutes to go to another meeting and mob received no indication from government as to how it plans to resolve the racist apartheid conditions the Intervention is causing and exacerbating in the NT.

Tasmania
On January 12 police stormed the Camp Florentine blockade in the Upper Florentine, Tasmania, which had stood for over two years, preventing Forestry Tasmania from building 4km of new logging roads into old growth forests. Three people were arrested.

Britain: wildcat strikes
Thousands of workers in energy and construction plants around Britain carried out wildcat strikes. The strikes were sparked when local unemployed workers were unable to apply for jobs at a Lincolnshire power station project, as the contractor hired Italian and Portuguese workers. Unofficial solidarity strikes were held across the country, organised by huge mass meetings of strikers involved. Elements of the strike had a reactionary, nationalist character, echoing Prime Minister Gordon Brown's 2007 slogan 'British jobs for British workers.' However, despite this being the focus of the mainstream media reports, there were also clearly tendencies within the strike who saw the bosses, not foreign workers, as the enemy. One picketer in Cardiff was quoted in the Guardian as saying: "I was laid off as a stevedore two weeks ago. I've worked in Cardiff and Barry Docks for 11 years and I've come here today hoping that we can shake the government up. I think the whole country should go on strike as we're losing all British industry. But I've got nothing against foreign workers. I can't blame them for going where the work is." Polish workers in Britain joined the strike as well.
The strike ended after a week when workers voted to accept a deal, negotiated between unions and management, that would see an additional 102 jobs offered to British workers on the site.

Greece
Thousands of farmers demanding compensation for low prices blocked highways across Greece seeking tax rebates & subsidies. The farmers' action across the country was strengthened by the landing of hundreds of Cretan farmers in the Athens harbour of Peiraeus intending to drive their tractors to Paliament. Strong riot-police forces engaged the farmers who defended themselves, some even driving their tractors against the attacking officers. Alarmed at the police attack civil servants across Crete walked out of their offices while shops shut down in protest across the island. Farmers occupied the Ministry of Economics & the Central Civil command of Crete and blockaded the Bank of Greece. Meanwhile on Febuary 3 a suspected left wing militant group attacked a police station with guns and a grenade. No one was injured in the attack. The group is called Revolutionary Struggle and they have previously shot police and fired a rocket-propelled grenade into the U.S. Embassy in Athens.

Brazil
The Sao Paulo police murdered a man on the streets of the Paraisopolis slum, February 1. His relatives and local residents have denied the authorities' lies that he was resisting arrest. Soon after the killing, hundreds of residents blockaded the

streets with burning cars and tyres and shot at police, wounding three. Police with automatic weapons used armoured cars to plow through the barricades and assert control over the slum, leading to overnight clashes in the sprawling hillside slum where some 80,000 people live in squat brick and block homes next to some of the richest neighbouhoods of Sao Paulo. Nine residents have been arrested and all have been released. Almost 300 police remain in Paraisopolis with helicopter support

Trinidad:
Residents protested police killing of handyman George Ashby. 52 year old Ashby was allegedly shot three times by police. From 4am January 23 residents blocked the roadway, preventing motorists from leaving or entering the community. Within minutes dozens of police officers arrived, armed with tear gas canisters to end the protest. The roadway was cleared around 10am.

USA
Mumia Abu-Jamal remains on Pennsylvania's death row. It is now the 27th anniversary of his unjust imprisonment. Racism, fraud and politics have been threads that have run through the case since its inception, and continue today. A new trial begins now before the US Supreme Court on two fronts. The legal defense team believes that the death penalty could be overturned if the case is brought back before a jury. A separate trial is to begin that concerns the prosecution's use of racism in jury selection. Relief from this was denied last year despite a divided federal court.
http://www.freemumia.com

New Bolivian Constitution
The Bolivian constitutional re-write, begun in 2006 with the election of a constituent assembly has finally been ratified by congress. The draft constitution was passed in december 2007 but was immediately boycotted by the right-wing opposition. In order to win the two thirds majority required to pass the constitution through congress, MAS (president Morales' Movement Towards Socialism party) had to make huge concessions to the opposition parties, significantly blunting the already moderate reforms in the document.
Of the 400 articles, approximately 150 were changed in negotiations. The draft proclaimed the nationalisation of gas and water, agrarian reform and indigenous autonomy. Now the changes ensure that no landholdings or private property will be touched, while indigenous autonomy will be cultural at most, not territorial.

Iceland
Iceland's president has called on the Social Democrats to form a new government with opposition parties to tackle the financial crisis. The prime minister has resigned since his coalition fell apart under the pressures of the economic slowdown. Demonstrations against the government and central bank had become regular fixtures in the capital Reykjavik after the currency plunged and the financial system collapsed.

More homes! Less rent!

SHAC – the Student Housing Action Collective – was recently evicted from the Melbourne University-owned terraces they had occupied for almost five months. In this article, K.F. Asseraf, a SHAC participant, reflects on the collective's strategies and decisions.

Strategies and decisions in the SHAC campaign

On August 19, and after months of planning, SHAC moved into Melbourne University owned buildings which had been empty for over three years. We informed the media immediately and offered the University a chance to appropriate us: to take our proposal for the site - a pilot housing co-operative - and make it theirs. Our strategy was to play one institution against another. We relied upon the anxiety of an institution trying to generate a 'positive public image' by managing the way in which it was portrayed in the 'news'. Another strategy, running alongside this, was to involve the local community: people living in Carlton, local students, international students. Banners, letter drops, public events, dinners, forums, tours, meeting spaces. The previously empty buildings immediately began to function as both a home and a community centre; many of our visitors became participants in the campaign, and were radicalised by the direct action we had taken.

Our combination of direct action, media games, a 'responsible' approach to fire safety and conciliatory negotiation was an important factor in the longevity of our occupation and the successes of the campaign. But this combination of strategies was also a site of tension as the campaign proceeded. On the one hand, we were, and still are (we are not done!), calling for institutional and regulatory reforms. We made an intervention into the housing crisis that is affecting both local and international students (particularly international students, whose exploitation is so often rendered invisible, despite its staggering magnitude), and tried to generate solidarity. In short, we used every medium available to us call for a radical re-organisation of the ways in which housing is institutionally regulated.

On the other hand, there was a sense at certain points in the campaign that the autonomous, anti-hierarchical and decentralised mode of organisation which our co-operative strived towards would be lost once appropriated by university, city councils, government etc (you know, 'responsible people'). The campaign was always going to extend beyond us, but we had to work to ensure that our values would not be effaced as our project was taken up (and this risky appropriation is, ultimately, what we were fighting for in negotiations).

I want to map out something of this tension, to outline the problems that we encountered (at least, as I understand it). It played out for us around the refrain of 'diversity of tactics.' Though it was this 'diversity' which was so powerful, I feel that this language can also be a dangerous one.

Invoking 'diversity of tactics' can hide the fact that certain courses of action exclude other courses of action. It can hide this reality of decision making (inclusion-exclusion), especially when we work with consensus. Let's not kid ourselves, there are always all kinds of violence when we come together and organise. If we efface this, and keep saying 'diversity of tactics' to one another, cracks in trust can show, support can disappear, collective members can become alienated from the campaign, and good collective practice can be forgotten (ironically, in the name of good collective practice).

Strategies, tensions

First, we said, screamed, wrote, submitted: 'co-operatives, autonomy!'. We argued (legitimately, and with the voice that our illegitimate position gave us) for a change in institutional regulation

and funding; for a change that would facilitate (relatively) autonomous living for students (collective responsibility, collective management, anti-hierarchical organisation). And we built a campaign with broad support and solidarity from unions, students, various organisations and local residents. We hoped, and still do hope, that this would allow a radical change in the ways in which we live and organise. But this was not just for us, and not only for students. The project was ambitious: work alongside Union Solidarity in order to catalyse a massive change in the organisation of housing in Melbourne (in all our hilarious submissions and documents we started saying 'affordability' and 'accessibility' alongside 'co-operative living').

So we negotiated. We started using stupid phrases like 'good faith', we wrote letters, made contacts with academics and politicians, we even organised a debate for the Melbourne City council elections.

As early as September the University Council received a submission by SHAC and directed the Executive (the Vice-Chancellor, the Provost i.e. the managers) to investigate the feasibility of student-run cooperatives like SHAC as a solution to the housing crisis. Despite SHAC's attempts to feed into this investigation, and despite a second and more concrete submission to the next council meeting, the Executive made it clear that they would not speak to us.

But then, after months of not negotiating with us, the uni imposed a stupid and aggressive strategic urgency upon the situation. They continued to impose impossible and coercive deadlines for 'correspondence', and, when we complied, they responded with extremely slow responses. In collaboration with Melbourne City council, they continued to sabotage negotiations (at one point, we proposed a date for concluding negotiations and 'voluntary vacation' – and they rejected our offer, sticking to their impossible deadline and massing security guards at the front of the building). So negotiations unsurprisingly fell apart.

Admittedly, there were key negotiators in the Uni who were approaching the SHAC issue with 'good intentions' and all kinds of 'good faith'. But intentions, like faith, are peripheral, multi-layered and complex. 'Good intentions' do not automatically translate into good outcomes. And who judges what is good in these circumstances? Good for who? And for what? There was certainly no clear consensus in the collective.

If there was both 'good faith' and 'bad faith', the issue becomes what we are placing ourselves against – the institutions, how they function, what they facilitate, what they cannot do. It doesn't matter whether the University's actions were 'caused' by incompetence or maliciousness, faith or intentions. The important thing to emphasise is the way the actions of the university functioned in the situation. In this sense, it's not about the intentions of individuals, it's about the necessary political actions of the institution and the realities to which individuals within these institutions are subject. And when we act, together, we can only act within this situation.

In this context, the tension between our strategies became more of a strain. There was a mood in the collective that we could not trust the university at all. Negotiation ceased to be a priority for the collective and a number of other goals and justifications came to predominate: squat, and inspire others to take direct action to meet their needs. Defend the site with barricades and media, and inspire others to defend their projects. This was also a positive opportunity to change the way in which squatting is perceived. Another thought that floated around: if they are going to fuck with us, then let's fuck with them. The eviction will hurt them, we might as well make them bleed: publicly - they are petrified of bad PR and the Secretary of the Trades Hall Council made some scary

threats about industrial action (which turned out to be empty threats, but the Uni took them seriously). Obviously, these latter approaches involve a refusal to be appropriated in any way by institutions such as Melbourne uni. They are less optimistic, more realistic about these institutions...or they are more romantic and possibly more self-righteous.

A further possible course of action presented itself once negotiations had broken down. In this case there would be a gesture towards the legal institution and away from the university. Melbourne Uni took us to the supreme court because the cops said they wouldn't boot us without a court order (interestingly, and this is something to keep in mind for future direct action housing projects, the cops thought we were 'tenants', not 'squatters' because the Uni had allowed us to stay for so long without booting us).

So the question presented itself: Was it worth contesting the Uni in the Supreme Court?

Involving the courts, in addition to the university and the media, offered further opportunities for playing institutions against one another. However the collective at that time made a decision not to fight in the courts, primarily because certain members of the collective would have had to name themselves as defendants and, possibly, be made to pay a whole lot of money to the university. There was also a feeling that fighting such a battle would detract from the 'community building' element of the campaign. Others, who were not active at the time felt that a legal battle was important, that it could potentially set up a precedent in which squatting might gain some legal status as in Europe.

Decisions

Decisions with respect to each of these pathways were made at different stages of the campaign; they were made on the basis of the power relations that were at play at any one time in the group of people that were involved. This was complicated by the fact that the make-up of the group continued to shift considerably. This made consistency in decision making difficult; it is hard to avoid the conclusion that collective action and consensus are best practiced when decision makers are consistent, not always changing. Although it is essential that we always include new people, a campaign will always suffer if those who have been around since the beginning are no longer able to be involved and share their knowledge.

In general, nothing can be decided about the right approach beforehand. Working out the best course of action is always a matter of context, and of not knowing in advance the outcomes of our actions. This is why being honest about our politics means being aware that there can be no evangelical certainty as to the best direction, action or outcome. We are just trying to work together, which means respecting one another, acting with trust and solidarity. But these are not simple, they wouldn't be necessary if they were (we were not always solid in this regard, often exhausted, we were rather too simple, especially when the tensions became a strain). They are only possible and necessary because there is tension and risk in everything we do.

SHAC was intense. It was high profile. It was hard. We were trying to do something that has never been achieved in Australia: legitimise a squatted social center. We were doing this in a social context where there was previously hardly any 'mainstream' support for squatting. This is not Greece where students control University owned properties. This is not Holland where squatters legally control buildings that have been left vacant for just 18 months. In this context, we did a brilliant job. But the scope of the project meant that it was fraught with difficulty.

Having said that, people all over the country should do what we did. We would support anyone who took the steps we took in order to bring about reforms to housing policy, put a roof over their heads, and draw attention to the need for more affordable housing.

If you want to read more about SHAC, and hear voices other than this one, take a look at our blog: http://shacmelbourne.blogspot.com/

RESURGENCE:

QUEER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK!

thu12th- sun15th March

22 Enmore Rd, Enmore
(New Q, Little Fish Gallery &
Black Rose Library & Bookshop)

New Q presents a Queer festival to celebrate our community, to strengthen our community, and to politicise our community.

We are hoping to create a space outside/within/around the spaces occupied by capitalism and the state where we're oppressed, marginalised and hurt because of how we express our sexualities and how we express our genders. We aim to do this creatively through interactive D.I.Y workshops, political discussions, food and festivities.

Our social exclusion through oppressive hetero-normative ideas and structures in society means that a space outside the norm is needed where we can gather our strength, celebrate ourselves, learn, explore, create and thrive. A place where we can practice and demonstrate our politics, our resistance, and our creativity.

We use the term "queer" in this statement to express the broad spectrum of sexualities and genders within communities. We use the term "queer" in an attempt to be inclusive, empowering and welcoming, where queer is about fun; where politics becomes fun and where fun becomes political.

Initially Mardi Gras provided an empowering space for queers guided by radicalism and open resistance. It played, and still plays in some ways, a really important part developing our queer community and giving confidence to queers coming out. However, many of us have become critical of prominent aspects of the festival. In particular how queer sexuality has become a spectacle and commodity. In response to these aspects, we want to celebrate, strengthen and engage our communities through our own counter 'festival', not be a tourist attraction traded in the pink dollar market.

The festival is what people make it. We encourage anyone whom identifies with the sentiments expressed above whether it's all, some, or bits, to be involved and to participate. We want to celebrate our difference but strengthen our commonalities too!

Now that you've read the mission statement and this sounds like something you'd like to be involved in you can submit your proposed ideas in the following way:

We need a general description of your workshop/event. Include what you wanna do, space & resources you'll need (i.e. do you need a projector, space to be messy, chairs, a quiet space for discussion), how much time needs to be set aside, and your contact details. **Get your submissions in by 26th January 2009. E-MAIL: kmor0858@mail.usyd.edu.au**

We're hoping to put a reader/zine tgthr so if you want, submit some writing/resources to go along with your workshop/event.

All submissions will be discussed by the collective (which is open) and you'll be contacted by mid February to sort out final details.

thu12th - conference launch & exhibition at Little Fish Gallery
fri 13h & sat 14th (daytime) – workshops/discussion/DIY skillshares
saturday night – Queer Empire Strikes Back! Party @ Red Rattler
sun15th – zine fair & market, bands & gaykart jnr

Palestinian Solidarity in Australia

by Rawan Abdul

Palestinian solidarity in Australia varies, especially during times of crisis. When Israel launched its full scale artillery-powered rain down on Gaza late December last year it was evident that people not normally inclined to voice support were nonetheless compelled to take a stance. The most encouraging event was the evidence of mobilisation; new people were getting involved in protest actions and other awareness-raising events, many coming from the Arab and Muslim communities.

In Australia, Palestine solidarity and rights groups operate out of 4 major cities; Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide. Groups in Adelaide and Melbourne, like Australians for Palestine, Women for Palestine and Australian Friends of Palestine are well structured and have various campaigns throughout the year. In Sydney the scene is more diversified with different groups that focus their energies on direct political action and awareness raising, like the Coalition for Peace and Justice in Palestine (CJPP) and the fundraising aspect which is undertaken by the Palestine Relief Fund. That said, political action and creative actions also emanate from small keen collectives made up of mostly Arab artists and activists who form on an occasional basis to organise events around cultural political work. Last year the Sydney's first official Palestine Film Festival was established with a view to an annual event.

As a secular Palestinian I find it important to keep Palestinian work within the frameworks of universal justice and am careful about religious demarcations on the conflict. It suits the Zionist narrative that the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis is to be viewed in terms of a Jewish/Muslim struggle born from time immemorial rather than what it should be seen as, a struggle against colonialism and an anachronistic 19th century nationalism- Zionism.

With this in mind it is important to also note that Hamas, Palestine's influential political Islamist organisation remains a movement that is within the Palestinian nationalist movement, its only difference is that it is topped with Islamic flavour.

The street protests and marches organised in the wake of the latest war on Gaza were interesting to observe. People mobilised en masse, and it was hard not to see that most of the people on the streets came from Sydney's Arab and Muslim communities. In any diverse community such as this one, you would expect a diverse reaction to the events in Gaza. This was reflected in the many elements taking part in the rallies. From the red flags of the socialist groups in Sydney, to the Greens banners, Hezbollah flags were on display as well as Hamas' green banners. In addition, various Islamic religious slogans were being carried and voiced in chants.

I understand the significance of the religious chanting and what it means to people who do it, yet at the same time I was annoyed that the Palestinian cause would be hijacked by it and the focus on fighting for justice and peace would be lost among the message. Our attempts to relay this to others also organising the protests fell on deaf ears. It is difficult to control a message such as this one and that wasn't my aim. I was merely trying to place the focus on how Palestine should be heard

in Australia. It is different when one is protesting and marching across the Arab and Muslim worlds and certainly in Gaza where people are martyred daily, yet context and environment matters. Interestingly among the many Palestinians in attendance who did not appreciate the strong religious overtones, many Muslim women voiced concerns about the religious slant of some of the rallies.

Finally it should be noted that Palestine solidarity events here should be Palestinian run or with a view to including Palestinian voices, it seemed to me and other Palestinian activists that socialists did not place this that high on the agenda. Frustratingly, it also seemed that the privileging of dissident Jewish voices was placed as more important than Palestinian voices. In addition, there was a maddening attempt to try and invoke a Sunni/Shia angle by insisting that future rallies should include religious speakers from both sections of the community. This added to the increasingly frustrating view that Palestinian and Arab activists saw the way that misplaced and misinformed activists from the wider community were viewing the struggle of Palestine.

Solidarity work for Palestine in Sydney and Australia will now take a different turn. The global initiative for boycotting Israeli goods, academia and culture should now take prime place as it did against South African apartheid. It is up to us to join the movement and make it work here in Sydney. It is the only activity that we can really be effective in, not just taking to the streets.

Jura Books raises $5,000. Needs another $15,000 to survive.

by the Jura Collective

Last year Jura Books was presented with a crisis and an opportunity, and asked for your help. The bank that holds the mortgage for our property called in the loan. They asked us to pay $5,000 immediately and the rest - another $15,000 - as soon as possible.

We are proud to announce that with your help we have raised enough money to make that first bank payment of $5,000! This is living proof of the amazing capacity and commitment of the community that surrounds Jura Books. We all believe that Sydney needs radical change, and Jura is a key part of making that change.

But we still need your help. We need to keep going to raise the next $15,000, so we can finally put the mortgage behind us.

Jura is the only anarchist organisation in Sydney that owns its own property, and one of the few in the world. This is an amazing achievement, built through the effort of members of the collective, and many supporters and friends over the last 31 years. The building is a stable resource for the broader libertarian community; it offers a base from which to keep up the fight for social change over the long term; and in it we can prefigure real alternatives to the present society. We don't want to lose our building.

You can make a big difference by donating just a small amount. If everyone who reads Mutiny gave $15, we would quickly reach our goal. If you can afford more, that will be very welcome, too.

Jura Books is doing a lot of great things. We sell thousands of anarchist and other radical political books at minimal mark-up. We don't make money from selling the books - just enough to pay some of the bills. Many of these books aren't available anywhere else in Australia. We also put on films, talks and other events for and about different political movements. We also maintain a unique archive of political posters, and we occasionally publish books and pamphlets.

All of us are volunteers. Please help us to keep doing what we do. How to donate:

- **Transfer your donation into our bank account using your own internet banking:**
  Account Name: Jura Books
  Bank: Commonwealth Bank Leichhardt
  BSB: 062 193
  Account number: 1020 4881
  (Please send us an email to let us know, after you've made the donation)
- **Come in to Jura to donate in person**
- **Post a cheque or money order made out to Jura Books, to PO Box N32 Petersham North, 2049, NSW.**
- **Use Paypal (jura@jura.org.au);**
- **Send an email to jura@jura.org.au telling us you can help.**

the struggle for freedom needs to break with the illusions of national liberation & argue for a 'no state solution' - *Dave*

The violence in Gaza is horrifying. The attacks carried out by the Israeli Defence Force are of such callous brutality that it creates feelings of pure revulsion. It is understandable then, facing such state violence, within a long history of colonialism, oppression & tragedy (the sad, strangely interlinked events of the Shoah & the Nakbah), that many around the world have been spurred into action to oppose the Israeli attacks & support the desires of the oppressed for freedom. But the very urgency of such an impulse can work to shut down the space to question the politics, & the social nature, of the various Palestinian nationalist factions & the politics of the solidarity rallies. It seems that opposition to the Israeli attacks almost always manifests as support for Palestinian national-liberation: the establishment of a Palestinian nation-state. This is often accompanied by either vocal support for, or a silencing of critique of, Hamas, whose militarised resistance to Israel is elevated into a symbol of authentic struggle.

Here I want to help chart a different course. Opposition to the violence of the Israeli military does not mean one has to support Palestinian nationalism. The struggle for freedom needs to break with the illusions of national liberation & argue for a 'no state solution' : a movement & future that is radically asymmetrical to all states & the entirety of capitalist social relations. I wish to make three points: the failure of national liberation in general, its specific limitations in Gaza, & the unexceptional nature of Israel.

In Europe capitalism emerged with the nation-state, and at the same time European nations increasingly dominated & exploited the rest of the globe – smashing or integrating pre-existing non-capitalist societies.

People in colonised countries often resisted by trying to form their own nation-states. This can be partially explained through the desire of a 'native' bourgeoisie or bourgeoisie-to-be to be the ones who benefited from the surplus created by exploitation. Throughout the twentieth century the struggles against

No state for you!: Some limits of radical & anarchist analysis of the attack on Gaza. - *Liz Thompson & Benjamin Rosenzweig*

This is a far-too-brief, hastily written response to themes in a series of articles/analyses/call outs posted to libcom about the attack on Gaza, & to arguments with anarcho & libertarian communist comrades.

Israel is a self-proclaimed "Jewish state", which is publicly understood by Zionists to mean not that Israel is a state in which its Jewish citizens are hegemonic, but that Israel is the state of all Jews, everywhere. Non-Jews currently or formerly residing within Israel's formal & effective borders do not factor into this self-definition, but they do figure in the policies & practices of Israel which are designed to guarantee, entrench, extend what is meant by this definition. This definition is an active project, an assertion of facts on the ground, which the forces pursuing one or another version of this Zionist project intend to create, reproduce, enforce. Given this general Zionist commitment, the only way to guarantee the impossibility of any challenge to, or effective contestation of, the exclusivity of Israel's ethno-religious identity is the social & political destruction of, in particular, the Palestinian people. Despite political & religious differences between the major Zionist tendencies, we would submit that these largely amount to strategic & tactical disputes within the context of the Zionist project outlined above, up to & including the re-emergent political consensus around the existence of an urgent "demographic problem" that could be resolved either by the mass transfer & expulsion of Palestinians, or mass death, or the latter leading to the former. The "peace process" solution - Bantustans of Palestinians without citizenship rights - is only a short-term, & not "final", solution to the Palestinian question.

A "no-state solution"

One can oppose all nationalisms & indeed wish to abolish all states & still recognise the very real differences between different nationalisms & different states. If Hamas wishes to carve out the space for it to act as a state over a section of the Palestinian population, to manage the reproduction of capitalist social relations, this does entail the existence of a population whose

colonialism & imperialism often tied the struggle against foreign domination with the struggle for socialism. National-liberation was seen as a step on the road to world revolution. It has been an unmitigated failure.

National liberation struggles are contradictory. In the struggle for freedom the struggle to create a nation & the struggle to free people from capitalism became counter-opposed. National liberation struggles mobilised people's desires for emancipation but the result of the victory derailed them. To build a nation-state the movements & struggles against oppression became the magma to construct a state-apparatus, build the economy (that is, compel people to work) & repress dissent through calls to national unity. This is no accident. The very idea of the nation is a bourgeois one: it flattens out the differences in class & power with a certain territory & equates the success of those within that territory with the success of the nation. These nation-states after their victory against colonialism were then slotted back into the global market & disciplined through chains of debt. While the vast majority of national liberation struggles were successful, their end result has been a strengthening, not a weakening, of capitalism.

And we see this in the Palestinian national liberation struggle. Leaving aside the corruption of Fatah in the West Bank or the reactionary Islamist ideology of Hamas, already we see nationalist factions repressing any autonomous movement of the working class. The Al-Asque Martyrs Brigade attacked the offices of the Union of Palestinian Workers' Radio. The main trade union body, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, has been physically attacked by both Fatah & Hamas. Each faction also manipulates strikes. For example, the Palestinian Authority ordered the teacher's union to strike or individual teachers would lose their pay; Hamas responded by threatening the same teachers with the sack if they went on strike. These are not unimportant incidents. Rather they demonstrate how national liberation subordinates struggles that could actually transform society, to the militarised logic of state building.

integration into relations of exploitation & alienation can be managed. From the perspective of, say, a Palestinian in Gaza, however, the Israeli state is not competing for the ability to reproduce their integration into capitalism. The Israeli state is pursuing their destruction. All significant tendencies in the Zionist forces defining the actions of the Israeli state are pursuing agendas based on the intent that such people should vanish or die.

It is not the violence of the Palestinians that has prevented Israel from having any serious interest in peace. Only a real threat to Israel could conceivably prevent it from pursuing its agenda of total decimation of Palestinian society.

"What they need is peace!"

Peace is, according to some comrades, the precondition for the two "nations", the two sides, to be able to talk to each other &/or for building working class solidarity. Peace being the absence of violence? No war between nations, no peace between classes, etc. This is a useful way of reflecting on the class realities of a broad imperialist war. It is not a useful way of analysing the class forces at play in the decimation of Gaza. The fact is that any "peace" acceptable to the Israeli state would be nothing more than a stage on the way to the decimation of local Palestinian societies. This is why any peace agreements, often unilaterally imposed by the US & Israel, are always predicated on the de-arming of Palestinian resistance, with no parallel halt to settlement construction, economic strangulation, military encirclement, violent Israeli incursion. It should not have to be spelt out that the peace process is not one.

This refusal to recognise material differences between a broad imperialist war, & a war of aggression mounted against a civilian (though armed) population, completely trapped in their homes, not fleeing in part because they will never be allowed to return, slides easily into its corollary that sensible Palestinians should get out, not fight back. This of course is where, actually, the arguments put forward by some anarchist commentators are in line with actual, if not stated, aims of the Israeli attack on Gaza, & with

Finally, even those critical of national liberation excuse it in this case because Israel is viewed as a particularly horrific state. It is not an exception to the global order. What Israel does: claiming of territory, demarcating of part of the population as citizens & others as disposable non-citizens, creating a militarised, internal-looking national identity & reinforcing of all these things by state violence is common to the history of nation-states. Is that not the sad lesson of Israel? That those who suffered so much from the establishment of nation-states, who were attacked as either being rootless cosmopolitans or too bound by a pre-modern ethnicity reproduced all the horrors they suffered when they took up the project of national liberation as the supposed solution to their very real woes & miseries.

What is being expressed by the Israeli violence right now, the creation of mass refugee camps, the endless construction of walls, the blurring of war & anti-terror police action is a crystallisation of the methods of sovereignty & governance used by most states. What we see in Israel & Palestine is just an amplification of global logic. Something that the Australian state carries out just as much – however here the distances of separation produced by the walls & borders is so great it hides these logics. All national liberation struggles can do is perhaps contest a rung on the ladder. What is needed are different kinds of struggle: where we withdraw our creativity from capitalist exploitation, evacuate from the state & create lives of dignity & freedom.

And this is the crux: the mobilisations in Australia are not just about what is going on in Gaza but also how the multitude here reconstitutes itself. & one of the clear hurdles we face is nationalism. Both Australian nationalism & the way that nationalism produces segmented communities that are then slotted into the liberal multicultural state. It's difficult stuff. We need to oppose white racism & foster & defend people's ability to manifest cultural practices & linkages they find important: but we also need to develop class solidarity. After all isn't this part of what revolutions do? Perhaps we can try to change the question & argue for the necessity of that which appears impossible – a completely different kind of society.

those of Israel's broader, ongoing, continuous assault on every Palestinian in every part of what used to be Palestine: that the population should leave or die.

Contemporary Israel is built on successive waves of flight from Israeli violence, following which Israel always refuses re-entry. Which is why millions of Palestinians outside the territories have spent their entire lives as state-less refugees in camps, barely tolerated by "host countries". Presumably this is where Gazans would end up, forever, & they surely know it.

The implication is sometimes that only nationalist false consciousness prevents Palestinians abandoning their homes, economies, lives, for a permanently precarious existence as refugees. Imagine parallel advice to victims of settler colonialism – Native Americans should just flee, Indigenous Australian resistance sustained a "cycle of violence".

This particular idea of "peace" is often connected to the idea of reaching out to the Israeli working class, an ideology with little connection to realities in the region. An internationalist movement to overthrow the occupation cannot wait for assistance from, in particular, the Israeli Jewish working class, as much as we would like such solidarity to become a meaningful factor in these struggles.

We don't have space to go here into a detailed analysis of why the fissures & contradictions in the Israeli working class are not sufficient to create a space for solidarity with the Palestinians, working class or otherwise, regardless of the existence or otherwise of suicide bombing or the world's least effective missiles.

This 'proletarian internationalism', proposed as a strategy for the Palestinian working class, often seems like a demand that people subordinate Palestinian struggles for survival to a relatively massively privileged working class, one whose interests & privileges have been tightly bound up in the dispossession & subordination of the Palestinian population as a whole. Which at the very least seems a fucked up version of internationalism.

REVIEW

Decolonise: Festival. Review by Princess Mob.
The initial proposal for the Decolonise Festival was wonderfully ambitious and necessary. It was based on the fact that a few streets of industrial Marrickville/Sydenham are now host to a cluster of warehouse venues, which raises a tangle of questions about sustainability, legality and the role art spaces play in gentrification. The original Decolonise flyer promised a space to discuss there questions: 'we will explore how to decolonise: how to think outside the scope of our "scenes", and how to avoid being isolated in our environment (without turning Marrickville into another Glebe).

That the weekend turned out to be pretty much a standard DIY punk fest was therefore a disappointment.

I don't want to blame the organisers (most of the overall work seemed to be done by one committed person). There were definitely external difficulties. For a start, it was a stinking hot weekend – not the best environment to encourage people to walk even the short distance between scattered venues.

And – in a very timely fashion – Marrickville Council had recently cracked down on some of the venues, causing them to pull out, and leading to a desire for secrecy that worked against some of the original aims of the weekend. That said, there were some practical measures that could have better balanced security and accessibility, such as advertising that listed the addresses as well as the names of shops where programmes and maps could be picked up.
I think there's also a fundamental problem with the model the festival seemed to inherit: it's very hard for late nights of shows and parties to coexist with daytime workshops, at least without a strong collective purpose that compels people to drag their hungover selves to a discussion. This meant that the discussions on gentrification and on the limits of 'do it yourself' as a politics didn't happen. I don't know if the forum on venues, licensing and community happened either, as I too lack discipline. It's a shame that this side of the festival wasn't much stronger, because all of these discussions are vital.

On the other hand, judged as a weekend of parties, the festival was great. The best events were those that stole space outside of venues: a late-night dance party in a well-hidden carpark, and a daytime alleyway show. That both of these took place without police trouble was a miracle I'm very grateful for, helped along by some smart organising.

Decolonise was also unofficial home to the 2009 UnAustralia Day Capture the Flag Contest: 'an attempt to halt the proliferation of nationalist symbols through competitive team flag stealing. It too was troubled by organising mishaps: apparently the phone you were meant to call for the judging location got lost. There were less competitors than anticipated, but the winner certainly deserved the prize, bringing a huge pile of flags.

In This Month's Zine:

We have news from: Canberra, Tasmania, USA, Bolivia, Greece, Iceland, Trinidad, Brazil & the Uk.

A perspective on tendencies within the Palestinian solidarity movement in Sydney.

A member from Melbourne's Student Housing Action Collective (SHAC) reflects on tensions and decisions in their campaign for affordable autonomous housing.

A debate on Palestinian nationalism and anti-state politics.

A review of the Decolonise festival that took place in Marrickville recently.

.....upcoming events

@ JURA BOOKS: 440 Parramatta Rd, Petersham. www.jura.org.au

Ramsey Kanaan speaks at Jura. 28th February, 6:00pm.

Ramsey Kanaan, founder of AK Press and PM Press, will be speaking at Jura about publishing, spreading anarchist ideas and operating a workers' controlled publishing house.

@ BLACK ROSE BOOKS: 22 Enmore Rd, Newtown. www.blackrosebooks.org.

Tea Party! 15th February @ 2pm. $5 donation or Free.

Instead of a Bake Off this time we're just playing games! Bring a favourite or join in on some of the Black Rose Collective's staples of hot dice, various card games and great music. There will be food around and the tea may turn alcoholic later in the evening.

Movie night 22nd February 6.30pm: *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts*

We will be showing the Spike Lee film '*When the Levees broke*'. The film focuses on the suffering of those affected by the devastation of New Orleans due to the failure of the levees during hurricane Katrina in 2007. The film points out that the disaster in New Orleans was preventable, caused by levees poorly designed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, with the suffering afterwards greatly compounded by failures at all levels of government, most severely at the Federal level.

RESURGENCE: Queer Empire Strikes Back

Thursday 12 – Sunday 15 March: see advertisement in this zine for details.